

PICKS UP THE WRONG ALLIGATOR.

Funeral at Jackson Park Causes a Panic Among the Attendants.

Five weeks ago two alligators caught in Central Florida were landed at Jackson Park and turned over to Chief Collins of the Fisheries Department. They were christened Columbus and Gen. Davis, and given space for a time in the edge of the Lagoon. The man who captured them left with Chief Collins a thrilling story of the manner in which they were caught, boxed, and brought to Chicago.

As soon as these interesting strangers arrived, and had been delivered to Superintendent of Installation Hopper of the Fisheries Building, it was decided to put them into the lagoon at once. It does not seem to have occurred to any one that it was a considerable change of temperature from the bayous of Florida to the icy waters of Lake Michigan; so a space in the lagoon near the bridge in front of the Fisheries Building was inclosed with wire fencing, and there the tropical monsters took their first cold bath. After the 'gators had shivered in the lagoon for a day or two, it was determined to take them out again and give them warmer quarters until the weather got warmer.

In removing the alligators from the lagoon the scenes that were enacted almost equaled those at the original capture in Florida. The saurians showed fight, and everyone was afraid to go near them. At last they were irritated so that they opened their mouths. Then their upper jaws were caught in a lasso made of rope, that got between their teeth so that it could not be bitten in two. This done it was comparatively easy to haul them into their boxes again, but everybody engaged in the job was glad when it was finished. They were then taken to the Horticultural Building and laid before the hot-air flues to enjoy a temperature of about 90°. But this step was taken, alas, too late. Columbus was uninjured by his arctic experience, but poor Gen. Davis had taken a severe cold, which settled on its lungs, developed into pneumonia, and carried it off early last Thursday night. The news of its decease was communicated at once to Sanitary Engineer McHarg, who is ex-officio funeral director for all the dead animals on the ground; but it was not until yesterday afternoon he came around to conduct the obsequies.

But the funeral came near leading to another. The chief burner of Mr. McHarg's party was an Irishman who simply knew that he was to find an alligator in a box and haul it off and who thought it was a simple affair. Accordingly he marched in at the head of his gang, stopped at the first box with an alligator in it that he met with, ripped off the top with an ax, and seized the animal by the tail in a business-like way, to heft it, as it were. But he dropped that tail with great suddenness. The Irishman had got the wrong 'gator by the tail. It was Columbus that he had aroused, and the effect was something astonishing. That tail was flourished around for a minute or two like the tail of a terrier; and but for the sides of the box would have broken every bone in the man's body. At the same time the great jaws opened and shut savagely with a clash like a steel trap, and the snorting of the insulted alligator could be heard down at the Administration Building. The whole party fled in terror, and the Irishman could not be induced to return. The others came back, nailed Columbus' box up again, and then, with many misgivings, lifted the rude casket of Gen. Davis into a wagon, and bore it away to its last resting place, the driver accepting its valuable hide for his trouble.

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